

Message Text

SECRET

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12

ACTION EA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T BANGKOK 12579

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, XO, US, TH, NZ

SUBJECT: VISIT OF NEW ZEALAND DEFENSE MINISTER TO THAILAND

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 3582

B. BANGKOK 12478

SUMMARY: VISIT OF NEW ZEALAND DEFENSE MINISTER AND PARTY
TO THAILAND LAST WEEK PROVIDED A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO
DISCUSS MUTUAL SECURITY CONCERNS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND
THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE NEW ZEALANDER'S PERSPECTIVES IN
THESE AREAS ARE PARTICULARLY ENCOURAGING. SIMILAR
VIEWS EXPRESSED TO THE RTG BY GOVERNMENTS OF THE COUNTRIES
TO WHICH ADDRESSEE EMBASSIES ARE ACCREDITED MIGHT BE
HELPFUL IN OUR EFFORTS TO ENSURE CONTINUATION OF VARIOUS
U.S. SUPPORT ACTIVITIES INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN FROM
THAILAND. END SUMMARY.

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1. JOHN ROBERTSON, PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE NEW
ZEALAND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND AMBASSADOR WILLIAM R.
KINTNER HAD A PARTICULARLY USEFUL CONVERSATION FOLLOWING
A DINNER GIVEN IN HONOR OF A. J. FAULKNER, MINISTER OF
DEFENSE OF NEW ZEALAND BY THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT
MINISTER OF DEFENSE. THE FOCUS OF THE CONVERSATION WAS
THE CHANGING SECURITY SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND
THE INDIAN OCEAN.

2. HAVING RECENTLY VISITED SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA WITH
FAULKNER, ROBERTSON WAS ABLE TO RELAY TO US THE CONCERN
EXPRESSED BY OFFICIALS IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES ABOUT
DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND, PARTICULARLY REGARDING WHICH
DIRECTION THAILAND WOULD GO SHOULD COMMUNIST BACKED FORCES
EVENTUALLY SUCCEED IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA. ROBERTSON ALSO
EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THIS IS A CRITICAL TIME FOR THE
SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR
WHAT THE U.S. IS TRYING TO DO IN THE AREA AND FELT THAT
NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE SEATO AS MUCH PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
POLITICAL BACKING AS POSSIBLE. IN ADDITION, HE FELT THAT
THE MAINTENANCE OF THE FIVE POWER ARRANGEMENT (U.K.,
NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, SINGAPORE, AND MALAYSIA) WAS OF
GREAT IMPORTANCE, AS WAS CONTINUED VISIBLE BRITISH MILITARY
PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE.

3. OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO US WAS ROBERTSON'S REPORT THAT
OFFICIALS IN BOTH SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA ARE QUITE
CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEVELOPING SITUATION IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN, AND THAT THE INTEREST ASSOCIATED WITH RAZAK'S INITIAL
DEDICATION TO THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE IS NO LONGER
VERY STRONG. ROBERTSON INDICATED THAT THE AUSTRALIANS
ARE ALSO ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT EVENTS IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN.

4. ATTENTION AMEMBASSIES KUALA LUMPUR, SINGAPORE,
CANBERRA, JAKARTA, AND WELLINGTON: ROBERTSON LEFT US WITH
THE VERY DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT HE AND DEFENSE MINISTER
FAULKNER (AND INFERENTIALLY PRIME MINISTER KIRK) ARE QUITE
REALISTIC AND WILL DO EVERYTHING THAT NEW ZEALAND CAN TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE SECURITY OF THIS AREA. THIS IS IN LINE

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WITH THE REQUEST WE MADE IN REFERENCE B THAT IF YOUR HOST
GOVERNMENT HAS SIMILAR CONCERNS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE
INDIAN OCEAN THAT YOU ATTEMPT TO GET IT TO SHARE THESE
CONCERNS WITH THE RTG. THIS MIGHT ASSIST OUR EFFORTS TO
GAIN ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONTINUATION OF VARIOUS U.S.
ACTIVITIES INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN ORIGINATING FROM THAILAND.

5. FOR WELLINGTON: APPRECIATE YOUR ASSESSMENT AND

AMPLIFICATION OF THESE IMPRESSIONS OF NEW ZEALAND SECURITY
OBJECTIVES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.
KINTNER

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